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ABSTRACT

The 50-item Bickley Assessment of Self Esteem (BASE) is an experimental instrument designed to measure the self-esteem of children enrolled in early childhood education. In addition to yielding an overall measure of a child's self-esteem, the BASE attempts to measure the child's general orientation toward academics, toward his or her teachers, and toward other persons. A study involving 206 children enrolled in kindergarten through grade 3 evaluated the ability of 14 BASE items to assess how the student feels in relationship to his or her teacher(s), or the student-teacher factor. Results of a one-way analysis of variance, with grade level as the main effect, indicate that when the 206 profiles were scored on only the items that constitute the student-teacher factor of the BASE, a significant difference was found between the four grade levels examined. A New Duncan Multiple Range Test was used to determine which grade levels were significantly different from others; kindergarten contrasted with all three other grade levels. A Kuder-Richardson Formula 21 reliability was computed to measure the internal consistency of the items. Overall, data tend to indicate that the BASE can discriminate between subjects on the student-teacher factor. (TJH)

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# THE ABILITY OF THE STUDENT-TEACHER FACTOR TO DISCRIMINATE BETWEEN SUBJECTS ON THE BICKLEY ASSESSMENT OF SELF ESTEEM

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One of the many factors that may effect how well a child achieves in school is the ability of the child to establish and maintain appropriate relationships with peers and adults. Although this important phase of the socialization process has its beginning during the pre-school years, it is especially important during the first several years of formal schooling. The ability to relate to adults, of course, carries over to how well the student is able to interact with teachers (Morse, 1970). The reaction the child receives as he attempts to interact with teachers will have a direct effect on his self-esteem (Bruan, 1973). The child who experiences difficulties while attempting to interact with teachers is certainly at a disadvantage both socially and academically (Brown and MacDougall, 1973; Clock, 1972). It is with this important consideration in mind that the Bickley Assessment of Self Esteem was designed to specifically include a measure of student-teacher relationships.

The Bickley Assessment of Self Esteem, or BASE, is an



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experimental instrument specifically designed to measure the self esteem of children enrolled in grade three or lower (Bickley, 1979). The test was developed in order to fill the need of measuring young children's self esteem at these early grade levels for several reasons. First, because the importance of measuring a young child's self esteem early in his school career is well documented, and second, because the better known tests of self concept currently available are not appropriate for use with children enrolled in grades below four.

In addition to yielding an over-all measure of a child's self esteem, the BASE attempts to measure three specific areas, or factors. These factors were defined as the general area of academics; the general area of interpersonal relationships; and the general area of how the student feels in relationship to his/her teacher(s), or the student-teacher factor. Of these three areas, the student-teacher factor is of concern in this study.

To be specific, questions were developed that attempted to examine how children feel when they are asked questions about the general area of academics. For example, a question such as: "When at school I feel?"; or "When I read I feel?"; are considered to be questions related to the general academic/school environment. Similarly, questions were constructed to measure interpersonal relationships, for example: "When I'm by myself I feel?"; and "Other people make me feel?". Examples from the area of student-teacher relationships would be: "When teachers help

me I feel?"; and "When teachers ask me to read I feel?". Of the fifty items that comprise the BASE, eighteen are considered to be questions of how a youngster feels about academics or school, another eighteen attempt to investigate the area of interpersonal relationships, and the final fourteen are related to the area of student-teacher relationships.

As indicated earlier, the BASE is individually administered and consists of fifty total items, each one read to the child by the examiner. The child follows along in his own booklet as the test administrator reads each item. The booklet consists of three pages plus a cover page for biographical information. On each page of the booklet are a series of printed, paired faces; one with a smile, the other with a frown. Each pair of faces are sequentially numbered so that twenty pairs appear on a page, except for the last page where the last ten pairs are printed. The instructions read to the child direct him "to make a cross" over the face that he feels best expresses his feelings about the particular item read to him. Several example items are provided. As indicated in the instructions for the test administrator, the examiner is cautioned to be sure the child is working the same number of item in his booklet as is being read to him. In an attempt to prevent young children from not attending to the task and therefore carelessly marking over the faces at random, the position of each face, either smiling or frowning, alternates throughout the test booklet.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the student-

teacher factor of the BASE. More specifically, does the student-teacher factor of the BASE discriminate between subjects over four grade levels; kindergarten through grade three. The implication, for example, is that a third grader who has good self esteem and is able to establish an appropriate student-teacher relationship should score very similarly to a kindergarten student who also has good self esteem and also is able to establish a relation with his teacher appropriately. Furthermore, youngsters who have low self esteem and experience difficulty establishing a relationship with their teacher should score similarly whether they are enrolled in the third, second, first, or kindergarten program. On the other hand, students who have difficulty in establishing appropriate relationships with their teachers would tend to score quite differently across the various grade levels. As a result, this study will attempt to reveal if a consistency exists within the BASE as a measure of student-teacher factors across the four grade levels previously mentioned.

Methods and Procedures

The items on the BASE specifically related to the student-teacher factor were identified. The manner in which the subjects responded to these items would be used in the final analysis. A total of 206 children; 57 kindergarteners, 50 first graders, 47 second graders, and 52 third graders, were selected and administered the BASE by their regular classroom teachers. In addition to obtaining a total score for each subject, each test

profile was scored according to how the subject responded to the specific 14 items related to the area of student-teacher relationships. All of the subjects were enrolled in public elementary schools.

Results and Conclusions

The means for the four groups ranged from a low of 10.88 at the kindergarten level to a high of 12.48 at the second grade level. The standard deviations ranged from 1.89 at third grade to 2.80 at the kindergarten level.

A one-way anova, with grade level as the main effect, was used as the main analysis. The analysis yielded a significant main effect across the four levels of the variable: $F = 6.53$; $p \leq .01$. These results indicate that when the 206 profiles were scored on only the items that make up the student-teacher factor of the BASE, a significant difference was found between the four grade levels examined.

Because of this significant finding, a New Duncan Multiple Range Test was employed in order to determine which grade levels were significantly different from one another. The Duncan analysis indicated three significant contrasts: kindergarten vs first grade; kindergarten vs second grade; and kindergarten vs third grade. All other contrasts proved to be non-significant. These results indicate a great deal of similarity across grade levels one to three as far as how the subjects scored the items on the student-teacher factor of the BASE. The only exception is how the kindergarten subjects scored on this factor. The data

indicates the kindergarten subjects scored significantly lower on this factor than did the other three grade level subjects.

To further analyze the student-teacher factor and to specifically measure how this factor relates to the four grade levels, a correlation ratio (eta) was computed (eta = .18). This low value of eta tends to indicate a very low degree of correlation between the independent variable in the analysis, or the four grade levels; and the dependent variable, or the scores on the student-teacher factor of the BASE. Of course, one would normally expect there to be little correlation between the four grade levels and the scores that measure the student-teacher factor.

Additionally, a Kuder-Richardson Formula 21 reliability was computed in order to measure the internal consistency of the 14 items that make up the student-teacher factor of the BASE, at each grade level. A KR21 coefficient of .74 was found at the kindergarten level, .72 at first grade, .67 at second grade, and .66 at the third grade level. Of course, these coefficients represent rather high internal consistency across the four grade levels.

Discussion and Implication

The data tends to indicate that the BASE does possess the ability to discriminate between subjects according to the student-teacher factor, at least as defined in this study.

The students in grades one through three scored the particular student-teacher items in a very similar fashion, indicat-

ing a rather high degree of commonality as far as how they felt about their relationships with teachers. The only group that deviated from the other three were the kindergarten youngsters, who, as a group, scored significantly lower on this factor. That is, the students in this sample enrolled in grades one, two, and three, scored relatively well and apparently did not have too much difficulty expressing their feelings in a positive sense when asked about how they feel about their teachers. The kindergarten youngsters, on the other hand, simply did not display as positive a feeling about their relationships with their teachers as did their older classmates. An implication that may be drawn from this is that the establishment of a relationship with a teacher may be a developmental one; difficult at first but easier as time spent in school in the company of teachers continues.

Of course, further examination of the student-teacher factor needs to be conducted. Studies of concurrent validity with teacher evaluations are a possible next step. Studies such as these would lead to a greater empirical basis for the BASE.

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